

DIRECT ACTION



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RESIST

No-one will miss 1985. It was a bad year for workers almost everywhere, and in Britain particularly there was little to be proud of.

THE MINERS' STRIKE came to its ignominious end in March. The heroism of countless miners and their families was betrayed by the short-sighted self-interest of a labour movement whose leaders would sell their best friend for a knighthood, while the rank and file would settle for a lot less. The rhetoric about "going back with our heads held high" is now as jaded as the promises not to forget those who sacrificed their jobs or their freedom...

PROVOCATION by the police, especially against black people became more open than ever, with riots sparked off by incidents including the shootings of a woman and a 5-year-old boy in their own homes...

THE DEVASTATING FAMINE in Africa continued its agonising toll. Band-aid became the fashionable cure for the man-made disease of starvation, but how many of those who bought a quiet conscience by donating gave any thought to the effect of their own lifestyles on the world's hunger? And what about the huge food surpluses, destroyed daily and benefitting only the greedy farmers of the affluent countries?

IN SOUTH AFRICA violence intensified as state repression clashed with the people's anger. But we have seen little sign of a mass industrial mobilisation against apartheid—something indispensable to a genuine fight for freedom for black workers...

CANCER struck Ronnie Reagan, but left him fit enough to shake hands with Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva—before going home to set off a test of the so-called "defensive" weapon cutely named after a kids' sci-fi film. The world's peace is in good hands...

THE CRIMINAL INSANITY of tit-for-tat terrorism had almost the last word in 1985, with the Palestinian revenge squad attacks on airports in Rome and

Vienna, which provoked the promise of yet more retaliation from the blood-stained Israeli government...

The list of 1985's low points needn't be prolonged. But it is worth glancing at the year ahead, with past events in mind, in order to try and find out what we're in for.

While many people on the left will see 1986 as a year of anniversaries—for Spain, for



Hungary, for Ireland—it will more importantly be a year when the shape of a terrifying future for the working class becomes more definite and more inevitable. From now on the going gets tough, as North Sea Oil production begins to decline and asset-stripping of Great Britain Ltd really gets going.

WE'VE SEEN the decay of health, education and welfare provisions—but the Fowler review, coming into effect late in 1986 will make previous cuts seem trifling. **ONLY A DETERMINED AND SERIOUS RESISTANCE BY A UNITED WORKING CLASS** can save millions from a descent into poverty unseen here for generations.

WE'VE SEEN the remorseless crushing of the NUM and the setting up of a new bosses' union among the miners. Now, armed with anti-union legislation, revolutionary new technology and, most effective of all, the easy tactic of divide-and-rule through buying off powerful minorities, the Tories will try a conclusive attack on organised labour in this country. **UNLESS THE RANK AND FILE CAN CARRY OUT VIGOROUS, UNITED RESISTANCE**, the benefits of a century's struggle and sacrifice by workers will be lost, along with hopes for a decent future.

WE'VE SEEN the privatisation of British Telecom (the profitable part of the Post Office 1986 will be the year Thatcher's rich friends get to buy British Gas and the Water Authorities (vital services to every family) at knock-down prices. What's next for privatisation—hospitals? Prisons? The police? **WORKERS MUST REFUSE TO ACCEPT THIS, AND MUST ACT ON THAT REFUSAL NOW!**

AND THE NOVELTY of 1986? We predict the Channel Tunnel as Mrs Thatcher's civil engineering Falklands Factor. With less bloodshed and expense than a small war, it provides the perfect excuse for the government and their lap-dogs in the press to enjoy an orgy of self-glorification. Less superficially, it will provide abundant (short-

term) jobs in the South East, while robbing dockers and seafarers of their remaining industrial power—and their jobs—mostly in the North (which will bleed to death as industry gravitates toward the Tunnel). It will also be an ideal chance (in view of the security problems a tunnel poses) to increase the arms and the powers of the police.

ANOTHER REASON WHY WE MUST MAKE 1986 THE YEAR OF RESISTANCE!

BREAK THE SCALES

Rich discover poverty

1985 was the year that the wealthy discovered poverty. First we had Prince Charles on the state of the inner cities and how he didn't want to rule a divided kingdom. He was followed by the Church of England with their report on the same shocking poverty.

We have always known about the poverty of this country but we also know about the wealth. The wealth of the Crown and the C of E who are the two biggest land owners in the country and exploit and use people to maintain their wealth and power.

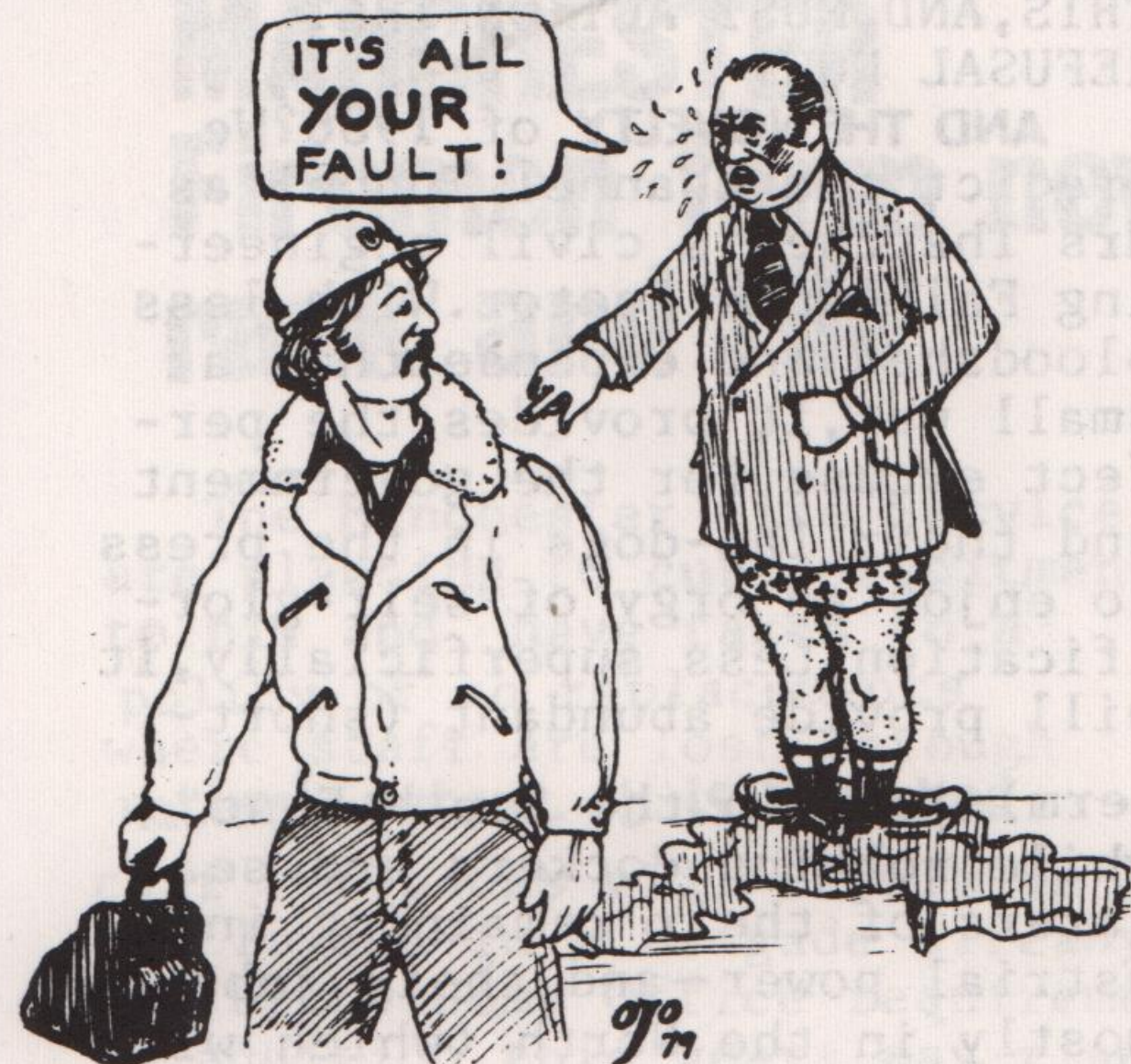
We do not want to live in a divided kingdom, but we know that the only way to unite this country and the world is by destroying the likes of the C of E and Prince Charles along with all the capitalist class and the state apparatus that supports and creates them.



Living in the past

Dr James McFarlane director general of the Engineering Employers Federation, thinks the working week is outdated. He wants people, that is the workers, to work longer hours at the busy times and shorter hours in the slack periods.

He may be a director general but he is not that bright, if he opened his eyes he would realise that a vast number of people do not have secure 5 day a week, 52 weeks a year jobs. These include seasonal workers who work in agriculture, holiday industry or any other job that is effected by such things as Christmas. There are also construction workers who are laid off at the end of their jobs and a vast army of part-time workers.



Brazen images

The last issue of the magazine 'Police' carried two advertisements, side by side. One for an eight and a half inch 'Officer in Riot Gear' and the other for an eight inch 'Coal Miner'.

On the road

Despite the general attitude that women are worst drivers a great many bodies and organisations disagree with it. These include insurance companies who offer better rates to women and the RAC, say they are safer drivers and the accidents they are involved in less serious.

"Hello sailor"

The Police have instructed Fords at Dagenham where there Ford cars are often serviced, that they are not to meddle with anything that has been fixed by the police. This is not for security reasons but because a police car fresh out from being serviced, ordered a car to stop. Instead of the words 'Police Stop' the driver was greeted by 'Hello Sailor'.

TGWU on TV

The Transport and General Workers Union is to sell itself by using TV advertisements. This is because the TGWU has been losing many hundreds of thousands of members over the last few years. It may gain the TGWU new members which will help to pay the officials wages but it will not help to make the TGWU more militant or a better fighting union, which can only be done by workplace activity.



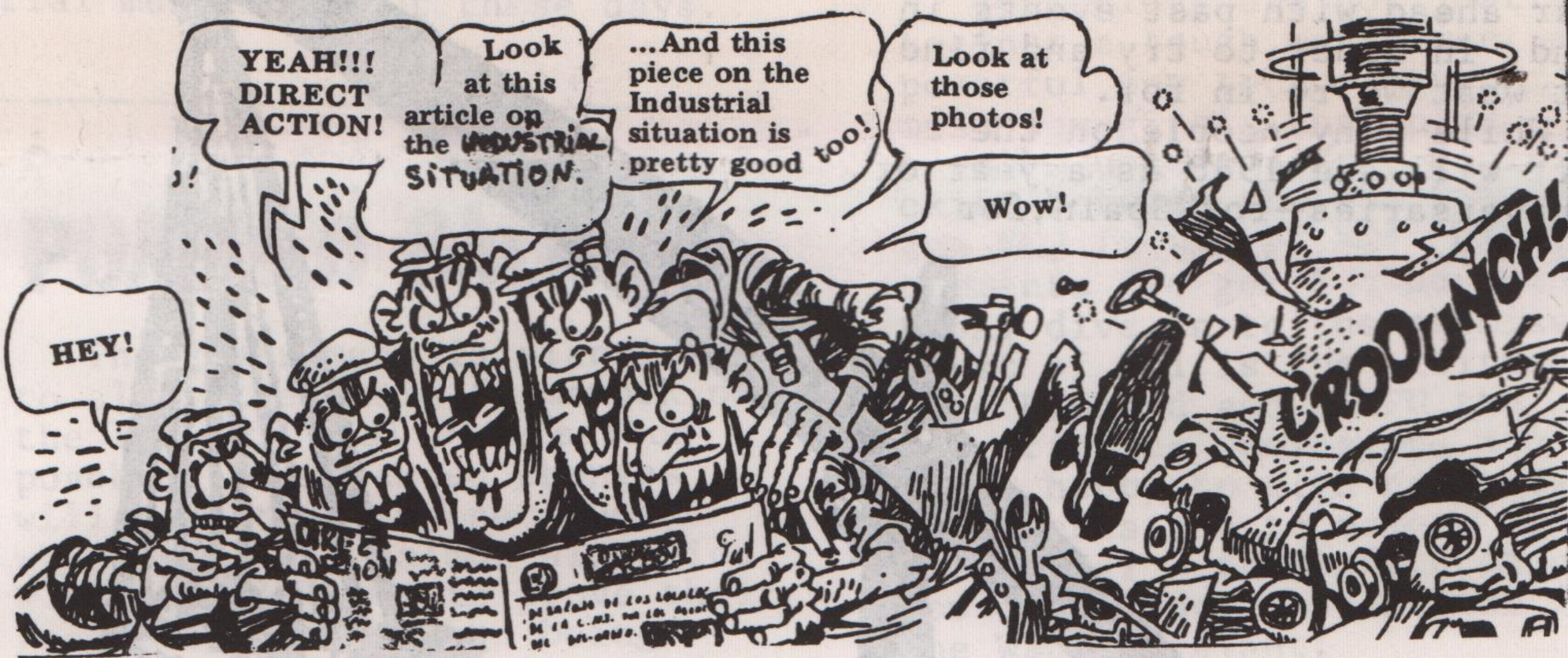
"We've got to lay off some workers...which department has got the weakest union?"

Direct Action fighting fund

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to the anonymous donor who sent the splendid sum of £1000 to DA. This is a great kick-off for our re-launched series of monthly DAs.

But it won't be enough to ensure a frequent regular and

constantly improving DA. We need subscriptions, and we need donations if we are to survive and grow in 1986. So, even if you can't manage £1000, please consider making a New Years Gift to Britain's only monthly anarcho-syndicalist paper.



Drive out the scum

There has been a lot on the media about heroin over the last few months, with everyone from the BBC to the Sun organising campaigns to stop the spread of heroin.

There is no doubt that heroin is one of the worst drugs and that it has got to be stopped. But the campaigns by the media will not achieve this, although they do make people more aware of the danger. Heroin dealers tend to operate in working class areas where there is a lot of poverty and depression. These dealers will be known to the people in those communities and they must be driven out. People who make their living by selling drugs like heroin to people are scum.

Rough justice

Things can be rough if you end up on the wrong side of the law. A man in Kuwait has been jailed for two years for defamation of the Emir Sheikh of Kuwait. Meanwhile in the USA a man in Michigan, who is an AIDS carrier, is being charged with attempted murder for spitting at police officers.

HAMMONDS WHOREHOUSE

"Contact" is not what its name suggests; it is not a paper whereby prostitutes advertise their services to would-be clients.

Indeed it is not!

It is a serious union journal, in which the very professional officials of the EETPU, the electricians' union, recommend their services to their members.

When in the 1960s the union's conscientious careerists took over from the Communists, they changed the paper's name from "Electron" to "Contact". In a way it emphasises their base and businesslike belief that everything should be left to the experts (and politicians).

In last June's issue of "Contact" Eric Hammond, the General Secretary of EETPU declared:

"The early syndicalist view that the industrial might of trade unions could be used to bring about political, social and economic reform was forced to give way to a belief that the best route to an improvement in the conditions of the working people lay through Parliament."

It's the old idea of "THEY KNOW BEST".

"...political problems", Hammond says, "cannot and should not be resolved on the streets, picket lines or shopfloors."

It all boils down to "Sell yourselves to the State— all your problems will be solved in the palaces of the powerful". It is the crude, irresponsible doctrine of Statism.

We say: POLITICS IS TOO SERIOUS TO BE LEFT TO THE POLITICIANS.

on the game

Hammond is "soliciting with intent"— he is out to gain members by doing deals with companies in the new technologies, and now it seems he wants to lead a right-wing alliance with the engineering union—the AUEW.

Some would say that he is selling his members out; others, like the Sunday Times editor, that the future belongs to him.

Either way, Hammond is touting for power and can't be ignored. He is after all the front runner when it comes to no-strike deals, sweetheart agreements, lower pay for apprentices and American-style business unionism.

Hammonds whorehouse

Hammond's whorehouse approach to trade unionism has specific causes. It is a product of the cut-throat competition between unions brought about by the current "economic crisis". The union's strong position in the power supply industry and the prosperous technological sector gives it an edge over other unions, while the ballot-rigging scandal by the Communists in 1961 has discredited all internal radical opposition to the union leadership ever since.

Hence Hammond has been able to go touting to the CBI (the bosses' confederation) for membership, and now he's wooing the AUEW and ASTMS to form an alliance of right-wing unions. Recently the EETPU began a campaign aimed at the new technology companies with glossy brochures, sales talk and the promise of no disruption.

To many this approach may seem un-English, and it's worth noting that Hammond did spend six years in Canada, which may help explain his hardfaced habits.

How the British public will take to someone who shoves himself around like a streetwalker or door-to-door salesman, I am not sure. The CBI gave him the brush-off, but Japanese electronics companies have been more amenable to his advances.

It's doubtful if most British workers will be any more ready to embrace Hammond's American-style unionism, than they do the Mormon on the doorstep.

parliamentary solution?

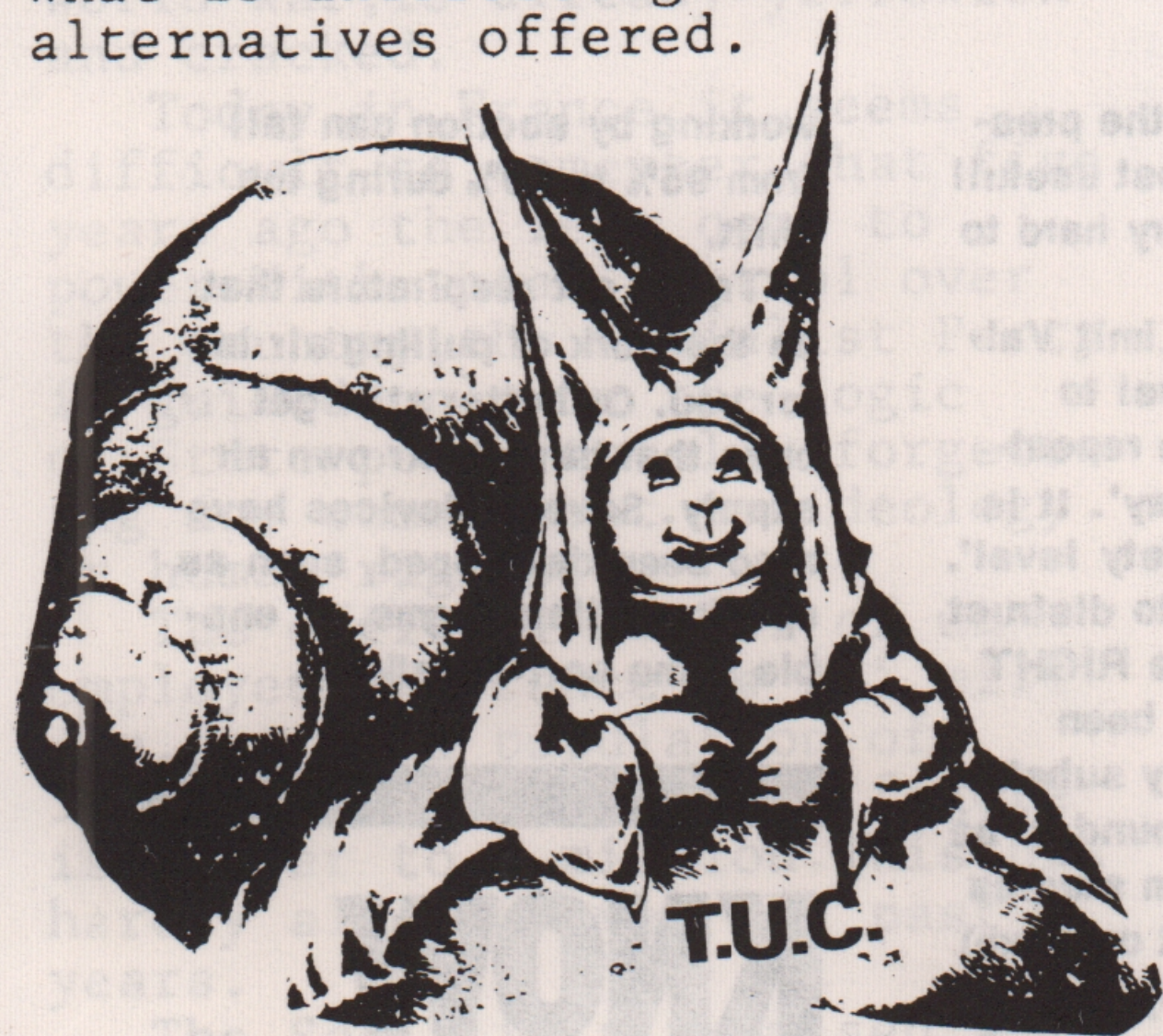
It's as if British trade unionism has run into a brick wall. The trade union tradition has become too short-sighted, sectional and steeped in its own occupational self-interests to develop an overall strategy or even the will to change society. But British Parliamentaryism, which for two decades after the war, under both Labour and Tory governments, seemed to offer steady gains for us all, now presides over wilting living standards. Any belief by the unions that a Labour government could reverse this is hopelessly naive, in view of the record of other European "Socialist" states like France and Spain.

Somehow radical trade unionists must find a way to lift grassroots unionism out of its hole-in-the-corner career of occupational self-interest, into the realm of a socially responsible movement.

towards a rank and file movement

The end of the miners' strike saw the Left in Britain take up an interesting range of positions. While it's not necessary to go into the various "party lines" here, it is certainly relevant to comment on and try to challenge the major belief that industrial struggle has, for the time being, been laid to rest by the state.

A number of leftist groups have compared the miners' strike with the period of syndicalist growth at the beginning of the twentieth century. Predictably, all have come out against syndicalism in general and anarcho-syndicalism in particular. What is interesting is the alternatives offered.



THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE?

Considerable emphasis has been placed on the Broad Left as the only alternative to the increasing dominance on the Right Wing and the practice of forming "yellow" or company unions.

If we assume that many rank and file activists saw Broad Left and the Broad Left Organising Committee as the sole real alternative to Willis and the TUC during the miners' strike, then the most important question is, why did they fail to deliver basic solidarity action during the year-long strike?

The BLOC is an organisation almost totally geared towards fighting union elections. Its weakness is its fundamental orientation towards "scaling the heights" of the labour movement rather than arguing the basic politics of working-class solidarity and rank-and-file activism.

LOST OPPORTUNITY

When the BLOC organised the lobby of the 1984 TUC conference, their organisers predicted a mass demonstration of 20,000. On the day, they achieved only 5,000, but more importantly, no delegations from any large factory or workplace were represented on the march. Any chance to turn their much-publicised "General Strike" into reality was lost due to their basic inability to complete the necessary work amongst rank and file activists and mount a successful campaign of industrial solidarity.

The actual usefulness of trying to unite rank and file activists around a policy of mobilisation for elections can be seen not only to fail to provide support during a large scale confrontation with the state, but in the day-to-day battles against employers and the union bureaucracy.

USDAW

To take as an example the recent Broad Left campaign in the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Trades (USDAW), the problems facing members of the pitifully low wages and the challenge of Sunday trading can be seen in contrast to the

decision to contest the recent elections for general secretary.

George Williamson, member of USDAW and BLOC analyses BLOC's disastrous defeat as follows: "Broad Left felt that, given the opportunity to put its policies to the activists and the membership, it would be possible to win support over the heads of the majority of officials..." but also notes that "many of the branches cast their vote on a tiny minority of the membership. For example Garfield Davies (right wing victor of the election) own branch, Ipswich General, which has 713 members, voted for him by three votes to two with Davies present and voting".

USDAW has a highly centralised union machinery, where full-time officials have a large influence, with a low level of membership activity in many branches, and BLOC's participation in union elections does nothing to change this situation.

The problems facing USDAW members are not going to go away. The need for activists to unite around the pressing



Rank and file conference wrecked by marxists

On the 30th November 1985 a conference was held in Sheffield to discuss rank and file initiatives. The conference was called by a number of rank and file groups, the R&F Building Workers, R&F Miners, Scottish R&F Teachers and R&F Teachers 83. The conference was also attended by members of unemployed workers groups and members of political groups.

The conference was generally disrupted by marxist groups who appeared to have no idea of what rank and file organisation is or of independent workers organisation. The greatest bit of marxist interference was when the Workers Power group tried to use the conference to instruct the R&F Miners what to do, this was of course stopped by the R&F groups and anarcho-syndicalists present.



day to day issues is as strong now as it would have been if Bill Connors, the BLOC candidate had won.

The fundamental difference between anarcho-syndicalists and the majority of the left is our analysis of the problems facing the working class. While the left would argue that there exists a "crisis of leadership" they are inevitably led down a path of elections, compromise and participation in bureaucratic machinery. As a result they fail in the task of organising the rank and file.

While no-one can deny that we face a crisis, it is far deeper than a simple matter of changing leaders, whether in USDAW or the next general election. Our crisis is a crisis of organisation.

We must recognise that the present reformist nature of trade unions prevents them even maintaining today's living standards, let alone offering a challenge to the economic system. So it is impossible to build a revolutionary organisation by attempting to win the leadership of such a movement.



Instead, like Bakunin, we adopt two basic concepts: an absolute confidence in the creative capacity of the working class, and the necessity for a revolutionary organisation—an organisation that can win the political arguments within the working class.

REALITIES

The necessity of building a rank and file movement must be seen against the realities of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Britain. We cannot hope to create overnight a rank and file organisation out of the membership and periph-



ery of the DAM/IWA. In any case such an organisation has to be built on sound foundations

Our first steps should be towards setting up an industrial network of militants, both establishing contacts with existing rank and file groups, and forming our own contacts in the workplace through sales of the paper.

If we are to work within a rank and file movement, establishing and building it, it has to be a principled participation. Past attempts by various left cliques have shown themselves as little more than party fronts—groups unwilling to trust the workers in running their own movements or in forming a genuine democratic base for a real alternative to the present reformist union organisation.

At no time does this mean that as anarcho-syndicalists we hide our politics and attempt to give the impression that we do not consider the rank and file initiative an essential building block of anarcho-syndicalist unionism. We will need to argue the organisational limitations of rank and file movements and the need to go further and form an anarcho-syndicalist labour movement.

CHALLENGE THE TUC

The DAM pamphlet "What About the Unions?" quotes an engineering shop steward as saying "The unions are in for a slaughtering, and only from the remnants will an effective labour organisation be built". This view was popular during the miners' strike. Many activists expressed a dismay that the TUC had not suffered more during the strike. Although the TUC is at an all-time low in its standing within the labour movement, it is undoubtedly part and parcel of the state's machinery, and therefore, within the foreseeable future, because it is necessary to the state's existence, it will not collapse of its own accord.

What separates us from ultra-leftists groups is our belief in organisation. If the TUC is to be prevented from fulfilling its role as industrial saboteur, it has to be challenged by an organised and educated working class. This means a solid, organised rank and file movement.

Scientists have been a long way behind in dealing with industrial health hazards. If you wait for them to come up with the solution some of you will be dead first. They complicate the issue, by creating terms like Threshold Limit Value, Dose-Response Curves, and by separating work of different specialists when the answer may be staring them in the face. There's a lot of science that needs to be done, but much of it isn't being done.

DUST DISEASES

The main group of dust diseases are FIBROTIC, caused by particles from 2-5 microns in size. (The smallest you can see are 50-100 microns, but if you can see them, you can bet the others are there too). These particles get through the nose and throat and into the lungs, where the body reacts by forming a fibrous nodule around each particle.

Which means that other plastic products - polyurethane foam dust synthetic fibres - could do the same. The disease is based more on particle size than chemical action.

Increase in the number of these nodules cuts down the surface area of the lung for oxygen transfer, resulting at first in breathlessness. These diseases develop slowly, they are irreversible and incapacitating but according to the scientists don't IN THEMSELVES reduce life expectancy. Varieties include silicosis (sand) asbestosis, pneumoconiosis, and now PVC is recognised as a cause of a related condition.

CANCER

Other diseases which are made more probable by exposure to industrial dusts include Lung Cancer; the incidence of cancer is sharply increased by working with asbestos - half of all workers with asbestos get it. Recently a similar incidence was found for coal; and the same might apply to other related dust diseases.

Apart from cancer, other lung diseases aggravated by dust include Bronchitis, Asthma and Emphysema.

But chemicals as well as dusts can cause specific cancers such as Mesothelioma, cancer of the lining of the lung, specifically caused by exposure to asbestos; and another lung cancer is caused by BCME; a potent carcinogen, which can be formed by the reaction of formaldehyde and HCl, both commonplace chemicals. Which brings us to:-

CHEMICALS

As opposed to dusts, these get right into the body. It would be impossible to mention all the dangerous substances around, one source has estimated that a new potentially dangerous substance comes on the market every 20 minutes.

Among the chemicals usually used as solvents, etc - which is where most workers are likely to encounter organic chemicals - a number affect the nervous system in the short term and the blood - hence the liver - in the long term. Examples include PHENOL, the

disinfectant which once polluted a reservoir in Rochdale, which is rapidly absorbed through the skin and attacks the nervous system; BENZENE which attacks the bone marrow and is in the long term, carcinogenic; XYLENE - often used as the solvent in paint-stripper - (blood, liver and kidney damage); TOLUENE, often used as being less harmful than benzene, but none of these are harmless; your reflexes are slowed down by exposure to any of these solvents, which will make you more subject to accident.

METHANOL is very damaging to the nervous system and especially the eyes, and causes long term liver damage. ETHANOL (ethyl alcohol) also causes liver damage.

CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS (carbon tet, chloroform, trike) again damage the nervous system and eventually the liver. These also give an example of how chemical hazards might interact; the combination of carbondisulphide, carbon monoxide and trike damages the cells of the inner ear.

SPOTTING HAZARDS

How does the 'medical-industrial complex' spot a hazard? There are three ways.

Firstly, experiments on animals, usually a 3-week long series of experiments. Because of costs there are very few long term studies carried out.

Secondly, epidemiological work - in depth health studies of groups of people, 'counting the bodies' as has been done on asbestos workers etc. Often this is picked up by workers noticing something as happened Vinyl Chloride.

Thirdly, chemical evidence, which mainly depends on GPs or Company doctors who sometimes don't notice evidence if it's staring them in the face.

There is a fourth way: looking at molecular structures. This hasn't been developed yet because the scientists have spent most of their time rearranging molecules to find ones that will sell. e.g. of chemical patents taken out between 1969-73 in the USA, 25% were by DuPont, 18% by Dow Chemicals; they OWN that knowledge.

Yet there is a remarkable similarity between the molecules of Vinyl Chloride and Trike. Last year, even company doctors working with Vinyl Chloride realised something was up. This highlighted the changing nature of diseases with changing processes - that the so-called 'Safe' new petrochemical processes have unknown dangers.

But trike has been used for over 50 years, and is probably used in over 10,000 degreasing units in this country. With the similarity of structure, warning bells should have gone straight away. Now comes the news that a preliminary U.S. survey links trike to liver cancer.

In fact it is most unlikely that any petrochemicals or organic solvents are not either carcinogenic or poisonous or both. Fumes from the above should never be inhaled for any period longer than seconds and they should very seldom be allowed to come into contact with your skin. Washing your hands afterwards will have little or no effect, so always wear rubber gloves.

So, to borrow a phrase, 'What is to be done?'. Two methods of overcoming hazards are the Basis of Industrial Health Strategy;

- Control at source by substitution
- Control by ventilation.

INVESTIGATE

Make a list of the known problems. Get other people to add to the list. Indicate which hazards are the most disturbing.

Ask questions like:

Do any vapours or fumes make you dizzy or give you head-aches?

WHAT ARE THE DANGERS?... HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM... WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT...

Do any dusts make you sneeze or cough?

Do you ever feel as though you have the flu?

Do you feel drowsy or irritable when you get home?

Keep a permanent record of illnesses. Something that causes mild symptoms now may turn out to be serious later. Long term health hazards are usually discovered only by studying post-mortems or by studying large numbers of people. And then it is too late!

Have regular and complete medical checks. Get and KEEP the results, and watch for any change since the last time. Check with other workers to see if they are suffering in the same way. If they are, the problem could be caused by work hazards. If you eventually have a court case, you will need this information.

MEASURE

You can call in the factory inspector to do some monitoring. The local inspector is in the telephone book; there are a number of these in each area of the country. But the Inspectorate don't have to tell you what they find - if they don't consider it 'appropriate'.

If you do call in the Factory Inspector, don't clean up before he arrives. Make sure he talks to you and not just to the management.

SMELL IT!

USE YOUR NOSE. Your nose can soon lose its sensitivity and many solvents don't smell anyway. But it will detect dangerous levels of certain chemicals. If you can smell chlorine, ammonia, methanol, trike, or tetrachloroethylene, you're getting too much.

SIMPLE MONITORING. Handpumps can give immediate, but not particularly accurate results. There are two suppliers;

Draeger Nomalair, tel. Blyth (06706) 2891

A.Pitman Ltd, Mill Works, Jessamy Rd, Weybridge, Surrey. tel. (0932) 44405.

A more relevant sample is one that measures the air you breathe for long periods. You will need a personal monitor for this. They cost around £100 from Casella of Regent House, Britannia Walk, London N1.

BSSRS has both a hand pump and a personal monitor but if you (or your union) can get one it will mean there are more in circulation. The analysis of samples is where tame scientists can really help. It is important to get a sample or estimate. It gives some sort of guide. To management it is a FACT that acts like a red flag. They may try to deny your sample. If they do, demand continuous monitoring. Vinyl chloride is already monitored continuously - why not all chemicals?

EVALUATE

This is the difficult part. There is such a mass of rubbish that has

been produced to uphold the present technologies. The most useful information is usually very hard to come by.

A word on Threshold Limit Values. The TLV is 'the level to which all workers may be repeatedly exposed day after day'. It is sometimes called the 'safety level'. There are many reasons to distrust TLV's. They presume the RIGHT to pollute, they have not been properly researched (many substances have not yet been found to be harmful, because longterm studies have not been carried out on them) they need to be constantly monitored if they are to be enforced, etc.

Again, standards are set for one chemical on its own, and don't take account of reactions with other chemicals. Experimental rats don't drink alcohol (much), people do; and drinking in the pub can bring out a rash in people who've been working with trike.

TLVs give a marginal legal power, although its only been used once so far, but basically don't trust TLVs. They're economic not scientific levels and a sick joke.

Set your own standards. -No detectable levels of carcinogens.

-set M.A.Cs (maximum allowable concentration) say at 1/4 of a TLV

ELIMINATE

There are three main ways to stop pollutants reaching you. Stop them at source. Remove them by ventilation. Or, protect yourself. The first way is the best.

You don't have to rely on management to tell you which is the best way to stop pollution. One useful book is the POLLUTANT REMOVAL HANDBOOK from Noyes Data Co., Park Ridge, NJ 07656 (Price about £20).

Exhaust ventilation is a highly specialised subject but anyone can detect patent defects. Make sure independent consulting engineers design it, supervise construction and test it, especially when dealing with dusts which are far more difficult to control.

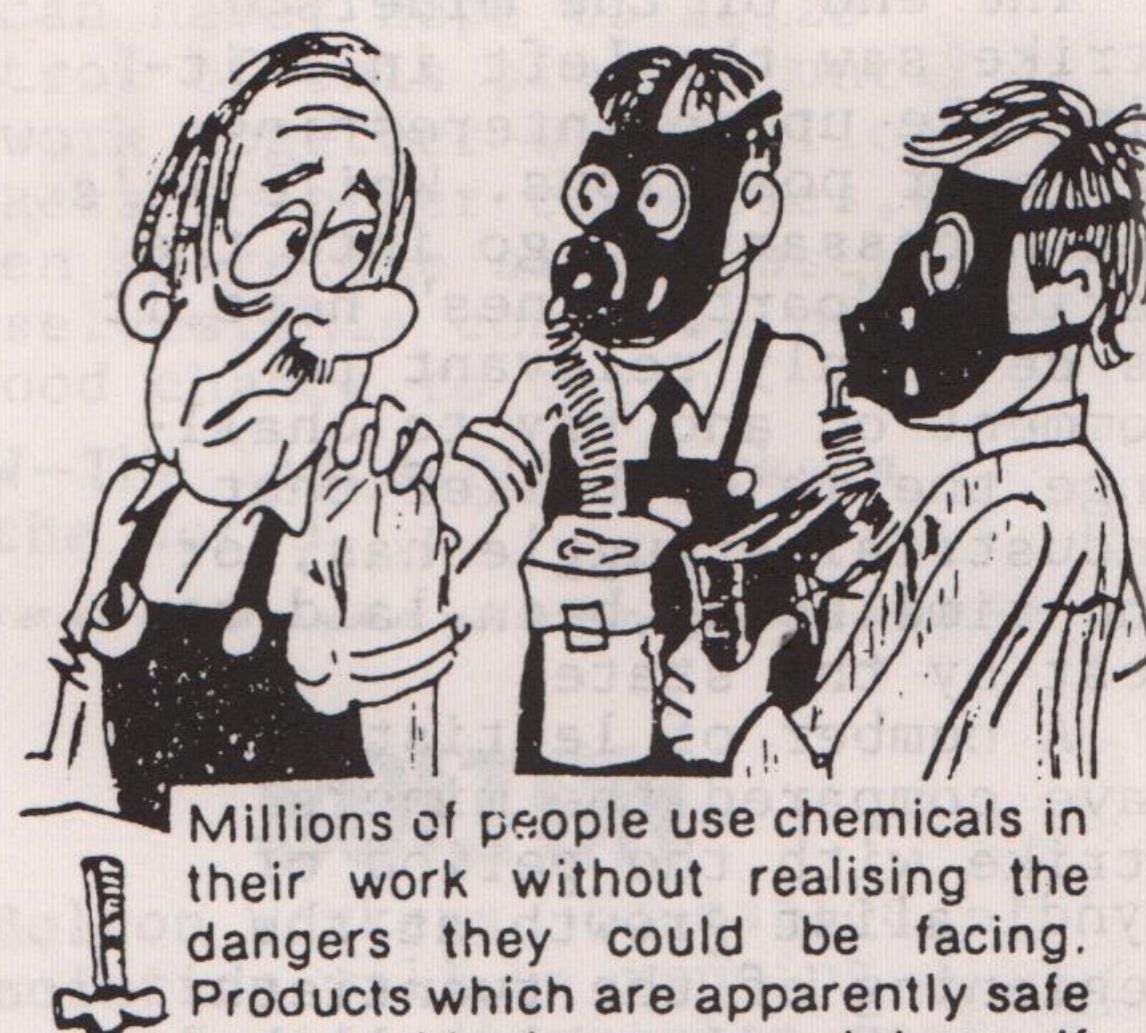
1) One duct diameter from the hood opening, the air speed is reduced to 10%; most duct systems are useless if more than one diameter away from the job.

2) If the ducting looks amateurish, it probably is.

3) Make sure the fan is a centrifugal fan rather than a propeller fan and is powerful enough for the job.

In other words, put your mind to commonsense improvements. A lot of experts won't have thought of them. General ventilation is less effective for dust than gases. Check that you're getting changes of air, not just the same air passed round. Check too to see that the fans aren't for example pulling trike fumes over the welding bay (trike if heated can form phosgene, a POISON - TLV is 0.1 ppm).

Not only do respirators shift the cost of contaminants from management to the wearers, but they can be a con, too. The efficiency of those



Millions of people use chemicals in their work without realising the dangers they could be facing. Products which are apparently safe can suddenly cause injury if conditions are wrong. Others may slowly, and almost unnoticed, destroy the health of the workers who handle them.

working by suction can fall from 95% to 20% during the shift.

Try to get respirators that do the work of pulling air in for you. Or better still get ones that have their own air supply. Several devices have also been developed, such as speaking diaphragms, to enable some sort of talking.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

1) RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Under the Safety & Health at Work Act, there is an obligation on factory inspectors to disclose information to workers.

There is a limitation, though, an inspector need only disclose 'such information as is necessary for the purpose of keeping persons adequately informed about matters affecting their safety, health and welfare'. It means the inspector acts with discretion he can give you information, but does not have an absolute duty to do so.

Outside bodies such as BS SRS cannot get the information. They're tied under section 6 and 2c of the Act.

John Todd, a Glasgow logger, complained to the Factory Inspector that asbestos was being stripped at the Kingston Public Baths, and enquired as to what action was being taken. Apart from being told that some action was being taken, he was also informed that, 'you will however appreciate that inspectors are bound by the Official Secrets Act, and there may be certain information obtained during the investigation that could not be disclosed to you'. That was in a public wash house....

But it is still essential to maintain links with groups like BSSRS, for they can help formulate the right questions to ask, and are in a position to give information.

The right to information also includes the results of any health checks. E.g., your urine sample for workers handling benzene, which was the demand causing alarm among management at BP Baglan Bay. Similarly, miners in Kent have been trying to obtain the X-rays of their own chests. They are worried about the diagnosis of coal-miners pneumoconiosis, feeling it may have changed with the new lump-sum compensation scheme. But the X-rays, however, are the property of the NHS and NCB. Recently a miner who had been involved for some time with fighting a case, had his personal file/X-rays delivered to his house by mistake. Police were round at his house within two hours.

LE CRUNCH

The CNT (Confederation Nationale du Travail) is the DAM's French sister organisation, affiliated to the IWA. Here, a CNT comrade gives a brief account of some of the main political trends in France today, and news of the CNT's response to them.

The photograph of Francois Mitterrand putting a rose on the grave of Jean Jaures, the Socialist leader assassinated for his opposition to the 1st World War, is already yellowish and cracked.

Today in France it seems difficult to remember that five years ago the left came to power. With total control over the country, the Socialist Party is guided only by the logic of State power, totally forgetting any commitment to ideology or human rights.

The official number of unemployed in France is 2.5 million, out of a population of 55 million, but the true figure is closer to 3 million. This has hardly altered over the past 5 years.

The Socialists promised a reduction in the duration of military service, with the right to conscientious objection for those who prefer not to learn how to kill. Today, anti-militarists are still in prison, military service still lasts a year, and as before it is illegal to publicise the right to conscientious objection.

BROKEN PROMISES

The Socialists used to have liberal ideas on prisons, yet the prison doors remain closed. Hypocrisy may have altered the name of the High Security Quarters, but it hasn't changed the jails for so-called "dangerous" inmates.

The Socialists promised to stop nuclear testing in the Pacific—but it's unnecessary to remind readers of 1985's nuclear test, which was backed up by the murder of one member of the Greenpeace crew attempting to oppose it, and the sinking of their ship.

Ecology is today a forgotten word. In spite of all the promises the nuclear power plants are still at work.

This list could go on and on—but are we really still waiting for any good to come of governments?

LABOUR FLEXIBILITY

Like all European countries, France is going through important and far-reaching social changes—all carried out at the workers' expense. The latest present from Francois Mitterrand to the bosses is work flexibility.

After long discussions in Assemblée Nationale (the French Parliament), at which the Communist MPs did all in their power to oppose it, the government found a way of imposing work flexibility, without the need for Parliamentary agreement. Their solution was rule 49-3, a law already in existence they had riouly condemned when in opposition. Trade by trade, the representative (by their definition) unions will discuss with the bosses the introduction of job flexibility. Needless to say, the bosses' unions call loudly for job flexibility. The following are the main points of this attack on workers' rights:

JOB SECURITY AND CONTRACTS: The bosses argue, "Allow us to sack workers more easily and employment will increase". We all know that in countries with less job protection, they are still waiting for this increase in employment, and it looks like being a long wait. Although in 1981, Mitterrand ended fixed work contracts, introducing job security so that only retirement, misconduct or the bankruptcy of your employer could lead to dismissal, this is now being reversed—another brick in the wall.

EMPLOYMENT— BY THE WEEK OR BY THE YEAR? Employing formerly weekly-paid workers as if they were yearly-paid (ie salaried) can mean employers are able to juggle with working hours, increasing them when the factories are busy, and decreasing them when the workload slackens while dodging potentially costly overtime premiums.

SMIG (GUARANTEED MINIMUM WAGE) TO GO? Once again, France follows the example of other EEC countries. The first step was the introduction on the TUC (the French YTS). Now the bosses claim that the minimum wage is a burden on industry. They fail to explain why the burden of the managers' and directors' wages—and perks—is so negligible.

THE LABOUR UNIONS

The CGT* says no to job flexibility, the FO* says yes, while Edmond Maire, the leader of the CFDT*, has discovered, after a lifetime in unions, that strikes pose a threat to industry! Thus it is the official policy of the CFDT to oppose strikes and to encourage negotiation, offering every support to suggestions designed to increase profits.

In all three cases, the unions are throwing all their energies into the factory committees, especially in the large industries. This is a result of the decline of numbers as workers are less and less attracted by unionism.

At the CNT we think that the "new unionists", who say that class struggle is dead are only painting in fashionable new colours the old conservative social values. We think that as strikes pose such a threat to industry, they should remain a favoured weapon for the workers' movement.

For early 1986 we are preparing a special issue of *Combat Syndicaliste*** dealing with the present crisis, new technology, flexibility and social change.

Like all the sections of the IWA, we reject this new kind of society which is being prepared for us by the State and bosses. To be a revolutionary union is to fight for better work conditions and wages, but also to work for a future libertarian society. CNT is certainly a small minority union, but in this time of unionism in crisis we have got a role to play. Workers fed up with reformist unions come with us to fight back and to make for themselves the decisions which affect their lives and problems.

NEWS FROM CNT

A national conference of education workers was held by the CNT at Vierzon in October 1985. At the end of it, our comrades decided to reactivate the teachers' union of the CNT and reassemble the contacts of the past.

Industrially, the CNT has a high profile today in the mail and telecommunications sector. In November 1985 the PTT (post and telecom) workers set up the Federation Nationale des PTT-CNT (first established in 1946). This was not intended to encourage trade sectionalism, but to make contact with the employers easier. As a result, in the Paris region the CNT has union recognition in many small workplaces,

so it can hold discussions with the bosses, hold workplace meetings (out of hours), set up union advisory panels, distribute leaflets and collect dues during working hours.



As a national federation, the union can legally claim these rights in spite of the efforts of local management to deny them.

Action is also developing in the health care field. These days, at the Polyclinique des Cedres (some readers may remember this as the Clinique des Orangers) in Bordeaux, the CNT continues to struggle.

Everywhere around France, health workers are affiliated to the CNT and form industrial unions.

More generally, we want our struggle to pass through trade barriers. PTT, health or metal workers won't be successful if they receive no solidarity from other workers. To the trade unions we oppose an alternative—local unions that assemble workers, the unemployed, the retired and the young together in day to day struggles. At the same time as we fight in the workplaces, we prepare in the local unions for the future libertarian federative society.

Olivier.

Union Locale de Choisy-le-Roi

CNT.

*CGT—Confederation Generale du Travail, union confederation dominated by Communist Party. FO—Force Ouvriere, largest French union confederation, independent of party influence. CFDT—Confederation Francaise Democratique des Travailleurs, generally under Socialist Party influence.

** *Combat Syndicaliste* is the paper of the CNT. Copies obtainable from: CNT, Bourse de Travail, 3 rue Merly, 31000 Toulouse, France.

SLAVERY: PAST AND PRESENT

Like many large businesses under the Nazis, the giant arms and munitions firm Flick made fat profits through the use of slave labour—over 40,000 Jews and other non-Germans imprisoned in Hitler's concentration camps. Many of them were worked to death.

After the war Friedrich Flick was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his war crimes, but was released after serving only three.

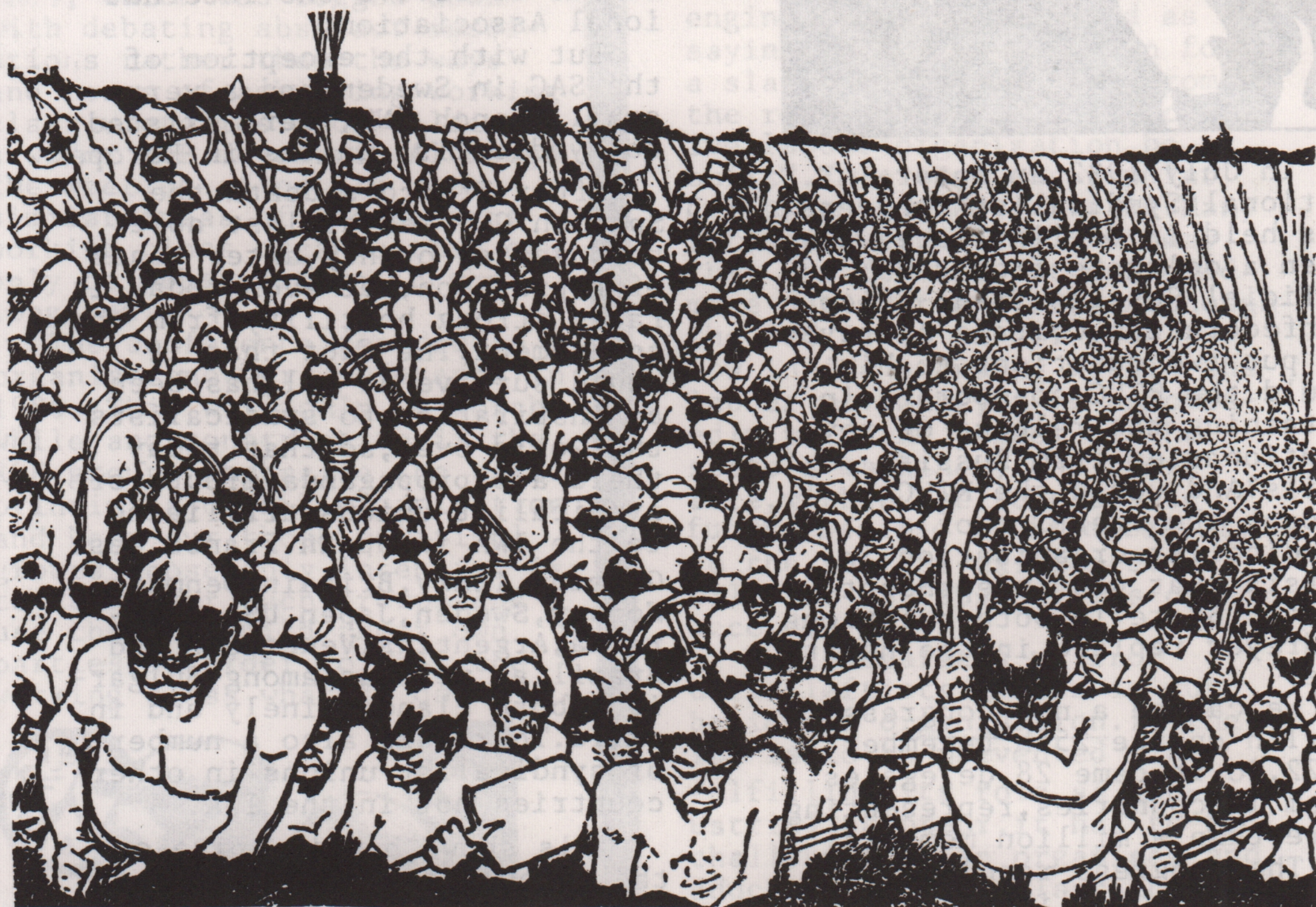
Now that the firm is being taken over by Deutsche Bank—West Germany's biggest—the Central Council of Jews in West Germany has asked that up to £2.2 million be paid to survivors of the camps as compensation.

The reaction of the Bank's chairman? "The demands are not a problem for Deutsche Bank, they are a problem for Mr Flick—if one can speak of a problem at all".

Meanwhile, another German giant has embarrassing charges of slavery publicly levelled against it. Volkswagen is accused of using slave labour on its cattle ranch in the Para region of Brazil. The firm claims it is not responsible for conditions on its Rio Cristalino Valley farm, because the workers are hired by subcontractors.

This is by no means exceptional in modern Brazil. In the first 6 months of 1985 72 complaints were made to the government of slavery in remote areas, including the use of children as young as nine years old, and the flogging of workers attempting unsuccessfully to escape.

The Brazilian government claims it is unable to send inspectors to investigate the problem, because "they might not return".





The IWA—the International organisation of the Anarcho-syndicalists—was founded on 25th December 1922. Here, the late Augustin Souchy, who was present at its beginnings, briefly recalls the circumstances of its birth and describes some of the events of its early years.

After the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 the international labour movement was on the brink of an entirely new situation.

The Second International, which was socialist, fell apart due to the First World War. In Moscow in 1919 a new international was founded, the Third or Communist International.

But it was short of Communist parties to join it, apart from the one in Russia. On the other hand there existed in Europe and America healthy syndicalist organisations.

The Bolsheviks called the syndicalists to the land of the Revolution in order to spread the revolution further. We syndicalists certainly wanted to do that too.

discord with Lenin's Russia
The syndicalist FAUD in Germany had at the time over 100,000 members. I was sent as their delegate to Russia, the Communist International meeting in Moscow during the summer of 1920. There were syndicalist delegates from Spain and France and our kindred spirits in England, the Shop Stewards. But we were definitely in the minority.

The Russians wanted Komintern to head the international trade union movement and be dominant in every country. We syndicalists neither would nor could accept this standpoint.

After the congress Lenin invited me to the Kremlin in order to cure me of my syndicalist infantile disorder, but he didn't have any luck. Some time later a Red Trade Union International was formed at Komintern's Third Congress in the summer of 1921.



In July 1922 an International Syndicalist Congress was held in Berlin. There was even a delegate from the official Russian Trade Union Confederation, Comrade Andreyev. We put two questions to him. Would the RTUC co-operate in obtaining the release of revolutionaries from Russian jails? And would the RTUC accept the creation of a syndicalist organisation in Russia that was independent of the State? To both questions Andreyev replied in the negative.

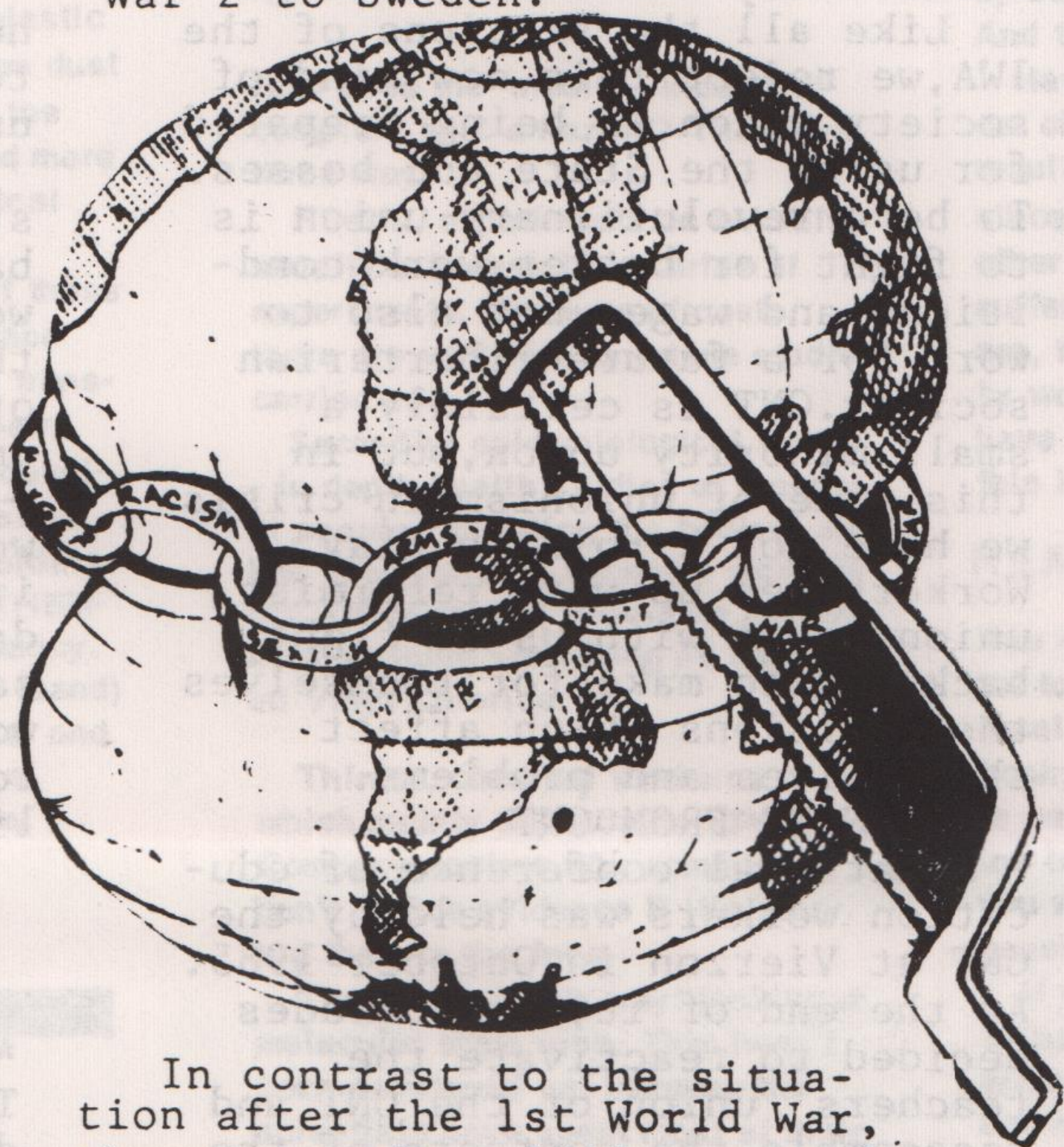
We called a new congress in Berlin on the 25th December 1922. To it came 28 delegates from 14 countries, representing more than a million members.

The congress resolved to found a syndicalist international with the name the International Workers' Association

or AIT as it is sometimes better known, by its French or Spanish initials. In the principal declaration which was adopted there was no talk of the conquest of political power—instead a society built on a free council system, without party domination, was demanded. The economy would not be nationalised, but collectivised, by the workers of hand and brain.

Federalism remained the principle of organisation, while direct action should be the method of fighting. It was demanded that national borders should be abolished, as well as militarism. To a large extent the founding principles have remained the same to the present day, even if certain points of strategy and tactics have adapted over the years to fit changing circumstances.*

The secretariat of the IWA stayed in Berlin until 1933. After Hitler took power it fled in turn to the Netherlands, Spain, France and during World War 2 to Sweden.



In contrast to the situation after the 1st World War, there was after 1945 no revolutionary climate. In the countries occupied by the Red Army only Communist organisations were permitted. In West Germany the Allied powers would tolerate only moderate union organisations, not syndicalist ones. In any case, the German syndicalists were almost totally wiped out by Hitler.

The same was true for the Italians, whose syndicalist organisation, the USI, was decimated after two decades under Mussolini. Spain and Portugal were still governed by dictators. The IWA's secretariat had fled to Toulouse in the south-west of France, where exiled Spanish anarcho-syndicalists strove to revive the International Association.

But with the exception of the SAC in Sweden and a very small French CNT, there existed no syndicalist unions in Europe.

After Franco's death the Spanish CNT was at last able to organise openly, after years of repression, but even today it faces strong hostility from the government. The fact that it could survive at all has been an inspiration to syndicalists the world over, so that today there are propaganda groups or syndicalist unions affiliated to the IWA in Spain, France, West Germany, Italy, Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Japan, USA, Australia, Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil, as well as among Bulgarians, both clandestinely and in exile. There are also a number of syndicalist unions in other countries not in the IWA.

This shows how, in spite of the turbulence of the last sixty years, syndicalist organisations remain rich both in creative vitality and in ideas.

CHICAGO CONFERENCE

In order to commemorate the Haymarket Centennial, the IWW* is planning a four-day international labour conference from May 1st 1986 in Chicago. It has invited revolutionary unions and labour organisations from all over the world to send delegates. To date the list includes Solidarnosc, the IWA and its sections, the South African Allied Workers' Union, the Federation of South African Trade Unions, the Dutch OVB, the Swedish SAC, the Texas Farmworkers' Union, the Farm Labour Organising Committee, Coordinadora of Spain, the Guatemalan Coca-Cola Bottling Workers' Union, the May 1st Movement of the Philippines, the SORWUC of Canada, the COB of Bolivia and many rank-and-file movements, including the British miners' rank and file.

It is expected that the IWA sections will participate in this important congress—as yet the French, Spanish, American and Australian sections have been in touch with the organisers, and there are hopes that a comrade from the DAM will be able to attend.

The congress will deal with some of the most pressing issues of the international labour movement, including high technology, threats to ecology, multi-national industries, unemployment and the repression of unions. The London Solidarnosc office has suggested that time is set aside to discuss efforts to support Polish workers, and the Coordinadora comrades have proposed discussions on the theory of class struggle, and on joint activities in the international transport and communications industries.

The IWW has suggested that the congress also discuss the possibility of setting up an international labour information centre, to exchange information on a global basis.

The importance of these proposals cannot be over-estimated. More and more the bosses organise on an international basis. They import and export not only money and goods

but whole industries and the jobs working people depend on. We can never hope to seize control of this process until we work together with fellow workers in other countries, who often share the same bosses as ourselves. This congress offers a good chance to begin.

*IWW—The Industrial Workers of the World.

BOLTON

Bolton Workers' Education Association will be running a course of nine discussion meetings on libertarian thought and history entitled "Roads to Freedom". The sessions will be held weekly at 7.00pm on Wednesdays, commencing on January 22nd, at Great Moor Street Annexe, Gt Moor St, Bolton.

The subjects covered will include Feminism, Tom Mann's Syndicalism, Spain and much more.

All are welcome. The fee is £9 waged, or free if unwaged. For more details phone Bolton 42869 or 68513.

TWO GOOD NEWSPAPERS

THE SYNDICALIST

The Syndicalist is a new paper produced by militants on Tyneside. It contains excellent information on the area's rank and file struggles, as well as more general coverage of events and personalities. It can be obtained by sending 20p plus a stamp to Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists, c/o Days of Hope, 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

RED AND BLACK

Red and Black is the monthly paper of the York Libertarian Socialist Group. Issue 3, now available includes plenty of local news, with coverage of health and housing problems in York, as well as comment on issues of interest to everyone. Send 20p plus stamp to Red and Black, c/o 40 Garth Terrace, York YO3 6 DU.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK continued from p4

2) REGULAR HEALTH CHECKS

While recognising that these can be a diversion from the real issue - to clean up the plant - they should be provided whenever there are suspect conditions - e.g. synthetic fibre plants. They are generally carried out on workers liable to recognised diseases - miners have had regular checks for many years.

3) PRETESTING

Put the onus on management to prove a chemical is safe - not on you to prove it's dangerous. The company medical director for American Cyanamid once said: 'To require experimentation with all substances would cripple progress... It would mean sacrificing comforts and luxuries we've long taken for granted'. They are worried because there's a Toxic Substances Control Bill going through congress. No worries here; we're only just recognising the problem. There is still no sign of any standards of testing being set, and

still no obligation to test before introduction to the workforce.

It's a shame they don't spend as much on pretesting as they do on sociological testing before introduction of a new product.

If you're going to be used unwillingly as a test subject, you need:

4) THE RIGHT TO REGULAR OR CONTINUOUS MONITORING.

PVC plants now have regular and visible vinyl chloride monitoring to show the workers just what they're walking into - why not other chemicals?

5) RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT ASSESSORS.

At BP Baglan Bay two BSS RS members were refused admission to the site, despite being invited to speak by the shopstewards committee and despite the threat of a 24 hr. stoppage.

Use the local university where ever possible. Although at Rover, Solihull, management refused to allow members of the Occupational Hygiene Unit at Aston University to investigate noise conditions in the print shop.

6) RIGHTS OF INSPECTION.

The Safety and Health Act does not contain any express provisions for inspection although under section 2(4) the secretary of state may make such provisions when providing for the appointment of safety officers. You can use section 123 of the Mines and Quarries Act which established threat for miners to inspect their work conditions.

7) THE RIGHT TO WALK OFF OR STRIKE WITHOUT VICTIMISATION.

In the US Supreme Court a decision was made that any stoppage must be 'justified' by presenting 'objective' data or evidence of the hazard, in advance!

8) THE RIGHT TO BLACK.

Dockers banned the handling of asbestos in 1967 despite attempts by Port authorities to convince them there was no evidence to prove longterm effects from short-term exposure to the dust. The dockers action is now fully justified. They have since blacked a cargo of PVC. Now the evidence of PVC pneumoconiosis is appearing.

9) RE-ENGINEER THE PLANT NOT THE PEOPLE

At GKN Telford, workers refused to work an £800,000 press due to a high pitched whine. It was sent back to the manufacturers who put in £100 worth of rubber mounting to eradicate the whine. If they had not refused to work the machine they would still be wearing earmuffs.

Substitution of carborundum for sandstone was the classic way of reducing the appalling toll of life of Sheffield cutlers.

Introducing mobile ventilation systems, rather than wearing respirators.

LETTERS



Dear Comrades,

In DA #26, Jon Bekken's article on the Wobblies referred to the "Marxist secret police" in the Spanish Civil War. This is not the first time that a writer in your paper has been indiscriminate with the term "Marxist". A Stalinist may call him- or herself a Marxist but obviously this would be an inaccurate description— but then Stalinists never were that hot on honesty!

In Spain of the 1930s the POUM called themselves a Marxist organisation, and if viewed in an objective light they were indeed more deserving of the term. But did POUM employ "Marxist secret police"? No. Did POUM suppress Anarchists? In fact its members fought bravely alongside Anarchist militants, and the suppression of POUM by the Stalinists occurred before the suppression of the Anarchists. This, however is common knowledge amongst Anarchists.

The fact that Stalinists call themselves Marxists does not justify dogmatic anti-Marxism. One banner of the Italian fascists was the black flag— does this make Benito Mussolini an Anarchist? Indeed many Anarchists, especially Anarcho-syndicalists, have more in common with certain Marxists than with many Anarchists, but I don't see DAM dropping the term "Anarcho"!

It is a serious game when you attempt to tar all Marxists with the same brush, but it is a game done rather better by Stalinists, Fascists, Sun editors and the BBC, to name a few! The dogmatic blind obedience to

holy Marxist tenets is equalled by the dogmatic blind anti-Marxism of some of your writers.

DA is a fairly good paper, but it would be a lot better if it left out those kind of remarks which only damage the paper's credibility.

In solidarity,
Chris Wells,
Manchester.

OUR REPLY: "But the party that shot those workers/smashed that strike/banned that union movement weren't really Marxist". Yes. The usual protestations of innocence. We've heard it all before.

Of course to the dedicated Marxist only members of their own sect ever are true believers.

But Stalinists are Marxists. They followed Lenin's policies faithfully as regards suppression of the labour movement and basic human rights; and of course Lenin's ideas are only the result of Marx's centralist dogma—ideas produced by intellectuals, for intellectuals.

As for the POUM they also tried to sabotage the CNT collectives, for like all Marxists they aimed for a barracks-like state, ruled over by the intelligentsia.

Likewise, Marxists have murdered innocent syndicalists and anarchists in Kronstadt, the Ukraine, Hungary, and, along with other workers, all over the hell that Marxism has created worldwide.

This practice devolves from theory, ultimately devised by Marx, though variously elaborated by Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Hoxha—take your pick. They all hold certain beliefs which are completely opposed to the best interests of the working class—chiefly the idea that it is possible to set up a benevolent, self-destructive State "on behalf of" the workers, presumably until such time as they have learnt from the intellectuals how to run things for themselves. This is self-evident nonsense.

Contrary to Comrade Weller's mistaken assertion, it would only damage DA's credibility if we failed to denounce the menace of Marxism as the danger it really is.

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

the Red Brigades, RAF or Baader Meinhof Group were described by Augustin Souchy as "the spoilt children of the bourgeoisie", and these are the main characters of this book, portrayed so convincingly—and as recognisably English—that we forget the unreality of the situation today



The only small faults I would find with the description of these people are two. Unlike most real-life middle-class right-on lefties, they don't appear to have a fetish about wearing badges. And their use of language is slightly odd—if they know all about the "fulcrum of imperialist struggle" and something called

"Althusser", why do they so crudely describe anyone they disagree with as a "shitty fascist"?

For the rest, I felt, as these characters were revealed in the course of the book, that like certain things you read in the papers, they were so incredible they must be true. Unlike the majority of their contemporaries in the rebellious generation of students—around 1970—who are nowadays to be found in lucrative trades such as leftish polytechnic lecturer or community worker, they have never grown up. Ms Lessing shows us their tantrums and posturing, the deadly urge to make the grown ups take notice, the facile quotes from Lenin to validate their political whims, the thrills of being chased by policemen, all set against the cosy security of a wealthy, liberal background which provides not only rich parents to scrounge and steal off, but

the confidence to deal persuasively, effectively, with the everyday trials posed by the Council, the Gas Board and the Electricity Board. For most of us it is a look into a world as different as the one shown in "Dallas".

Their political organisation, too, is laughable, incredible, and yet a telling satire on the arrogant, elitist ideas of some of the loony left groups—indeed, in essence of Marxism in general. The CCU regards itself as the "chosen few", the "vanguard" who have a monopoly on some glorious future. The fact that they are even fewer than the DAM is a source of pride to them—"they lose touch with the masses, those large parties", as one of its members points out. The CCU seems to be in such perfect accord with "the masses" that it has no need to produce even a newsheet to spread its views—or would that be too much like hard work?

What the average individual who pays £9.50 for a novel makes of all this I have no idea. To an anarcho-syndicalist however, it underlines two lessons which we must never forget. Firstly, the absolute futility of terrorism as a tactic—it is wasteful, dangerous and above all has meaning only for the small elite who carry it out, while the mass of ordinary people feel nothing but revulsion at its gratuitous nature (especially the present reviewer, who narrowly escaped an unpleasant end of this kind!).

Secondly, THE GOOD TERRORIST illustrates for us the utterly parasitic and self-indulgent nature of middle-class involvement in left-wing struggles. Let them go elsewhere to live out their fantasies of heroism and other hang-ups. They must be made to keep their noses out of the genuine efforts made by working people to change the real world. We get useful revolutionary theory from action, not from experts in universities.

Finally, reading this book gave rise to thoughts of what Doris Lessing had not written. She is a fine writer, graceful, intelligent and unflinchingly moral. Everything she has written is well worth reading. Yet, in writing about a revolutionary organisation in modern Britain, she can only give us this picture of the middle class dabbling amateurishly with bombs, because of course she is herself middle-class, like most writers. I think with sadness of books about ordinary working-class revolutionaries which haven't been and never will be written because their could-be authors never had the education, the confidence in their abilities or the time.

A.R.

D.A.M

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

(1) The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.

(2) Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.

(3) We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need not profit.

(4) In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.

(5) We believe that the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of, and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers organisations must be controlled by workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

(6) We are opposed to all States and State institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all States do not exist to protect the workers of those States, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

(7) We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to control their own lives and the environment.

(8) The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism; a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

* I would like to know more *
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* POST CODE..... *
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DIRECT ACTION

ADDENBROOKES — fight continues

The domestics at Addenbrookes Hospital have now been out on official strike for 15 months against the "dirty ward" regime set up by NHS privatisation moves. If the battle against the OCS company and the Cambridge Health Authority was n't enough, the strikers now also have their own officials to contend with.

Graham Heneghan of Addenbrookes Strike Committee tells the story: "We are now considered an embarrassment to our union leadership. They will give us any excuse under the sun so that they have to do nothing to support us. Yet we are doing their fighting without their pay."

"Barking and recently Scarsdale Hospital strikes have been stitched up by the union officials taking over the strike committees. We have seen the demoralised look on the faces of the women domestics after their officials sold them down the drain. So when they tried it here at Addenbrookes we were ready for them and got our people to attend the extraordinary branch meeting called by the full-time officer Eddie Bradin of NUPE."

"At the end of the day he was outvoted at his own game. COHSE also have been told by the women domestics here that they will not give up. So for the time being we have got the Union officials off our backs! Now we can get on with the business of moving the struggle forward."

MANCHESTER Firemen form new rank and file

The Manchester Fire Service are planning to cut recruitment to nil and have taken to a policy of no replacements where staff are lost through natural wastage. It is expected

that cut-backs will result in 300 job losses in a brigade already 200 below Home Office requirements. In addition, this year's pay rise is uncertain.

The Fire Brigades Union has not reacted to these problems, and a Rank and File group has been formed in response. It has produced a leaflet, which the management described as "poison", and earned the description "traitors" for those who circulated it from the union's National Officers.

Undaunted the members of the Rank and File are carrying on the struggle and are currently producing a broadsheet in their area.

A NATION OF ANIMAL LOVERS

Sacristan Colliery in County Durham is no more. The last of the 200 miners left on the payroll stayed on till Christmas doing salvage work.

Most of the attention in the local media on the closure of the 100 year old colliery centred on the fate of the last pit ponies left in the Durham coalfield. It seems the well-being of these animals is more important than that of the human beings who earn a living in the mines.

The "Northern Echo" reports the closure under the headline "Goodbye Old Faithfuls", referring of course to the ponies, not the miners. Since the strike no expense has been spared by our wonderful free press and those who own it in portraying the miners as unreasonable thugs led by red wreckers in the pay of Moscow and Libya.

Readers will be glad to hear that the ponies will be looked after. — "From the magnificent seven ponies, three—Sandy, Smokie and Darkie—have been found new jobs at Ellington Colliery in Northumberland. For the rest, the life of luxury beckons. Bobby and Topper have been booked in at an animal rest home in Carlisle, Matt has been promised to a family as a pet, while Pip will be keeping alive the nostalgia of the old days of the mining industry in new lodgings at Beamish Open Air Museum".

There are a lot of industrial museums about these days.

POACHED SALMON

The government is planning to alter the whole framework of the law—to deal with salmon poaching. The planned changes will mean that anyone found walking with a salmon alongside a river will have to prove their innocence, rather than being assumed innocent until proved guilty. So beware. If someone sells you a cheap salmon, get a receipt. After all, it could be the local constabulary setting a trap for illegal salmon carriers.

ITS AN ILL WIND ...

Over a year ago the Union Carbide chemical plant at Bhopal in India leaked poison gas over the town, killing at least 2,500 people and poisoning thousands more, who are still suffering the effects. Now scientists are taking advantage of the disaster to study the effect of the gas. Not to prevent further suffering, but to investigate its potential as a weapon.

Thousands of pounds are being spent, not to help the injured but to work out how it could be used in war.

Union Carbide's top poisons expert is Dr Bryan Ballantyne, who until 1979 worked at Porton Down, the Ministry of Defence's biological and chemical research establishment. In 1984 he was a participant in a USA army chemical weapons review in Maryland where his paper concerned the effects of hydrogen cyanide poisoning. At Porton Ballantyne investigated the effect of injecting rabbits and pigs with cyanide—amazingly, they died.

BAD NEWS IN FLEET STREET

The print unions are under attack both in Fleet Street and in the provinces. The threat posed by Eddie Shah's new full-colour daily has induced the newspaper barons to prepare a full-scale attack on their own workforces.

The figures say it all. Using unskilled labour and new technology the new paper should break even on a print run of 300,000 copies a day, employing only 500. The Daily Mirror must sell 3½ million copies to break even, and employs 2,000 plus.

A showdown is expected as the Daily Telegraph's new plant at Tower Hamlets nears completion. It is unknown whether non-union labour will be brought in. Meanwhile, rumour has it that bastion of the Labour Party, Robert Maxwell plans to cut his workforce by half.

What is known is that Rupert Murdoch's News International (publishers of the Sun, News of the World, Times etc) plans the launch of a new London evening paper without the agreement of the unions. It will come from a new plant at Wapping, costing £80 million, which, together with plant in Glasgow presently being overhauled, could take over one or more of News International's existing titles, with massive redundancies.

Murdoch demands that the unions accept 4 key points—a no-strike deal, a ban on closed shops, "managements right to manage", and legally binding agreements.

The unions are not just up against a tough management and powerful new technology, but, most damagingly, the split between unions. Bitter divisions exist between the NGA, SOBAT and the NUJ (a sacked NGA member comments "We got locked out and SOGAT dive on to the premises"). Worst of all is the attitude of Eric Hammond and EETPU, the electricians' union, who are quite happy to sign no-strike agreements and to make a single union deal with Murdoch which would exclude other unions from the Wapping plant.

Only if the rank-and-file reject this kind of greedy sectionalism and start to build links across the different union lines, and between Fleet Street and the provinces will there be any hope of an effective defence against these attacks on the unions.

And only then will there exist a chance that new technology can be put to good use liberating thousands of people from boring jobs, rather than generating yet more money for a few greedy millionaires.

industry in brief...

STOP THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Over 160 clothing workers in South Shields have been on strike since 17 September 1985 for union recognition. The Contracts Company which is a subsidiary of French Connection have refused to recognise the union since February 1985 even though there has been over 100 members at the factory since it opened in July 1984 and many have previous membership.

The strikers' leaflet states that: 'Overtime is compulsory. If we don't work it we get the sack. There are no allowances with bonus scheme. We have to use a disc system to visit the toilets. The Company's discretion is used to pay full basic wage. No one can earn bonus no matter how hard they work. Management talk to us like we are dogs. No warnings are given before sacking of employees. The workforce has tried all sorts of methods to urge the employers to recognise the Union, including petitions and challenging them to arbitration through ACAS'.

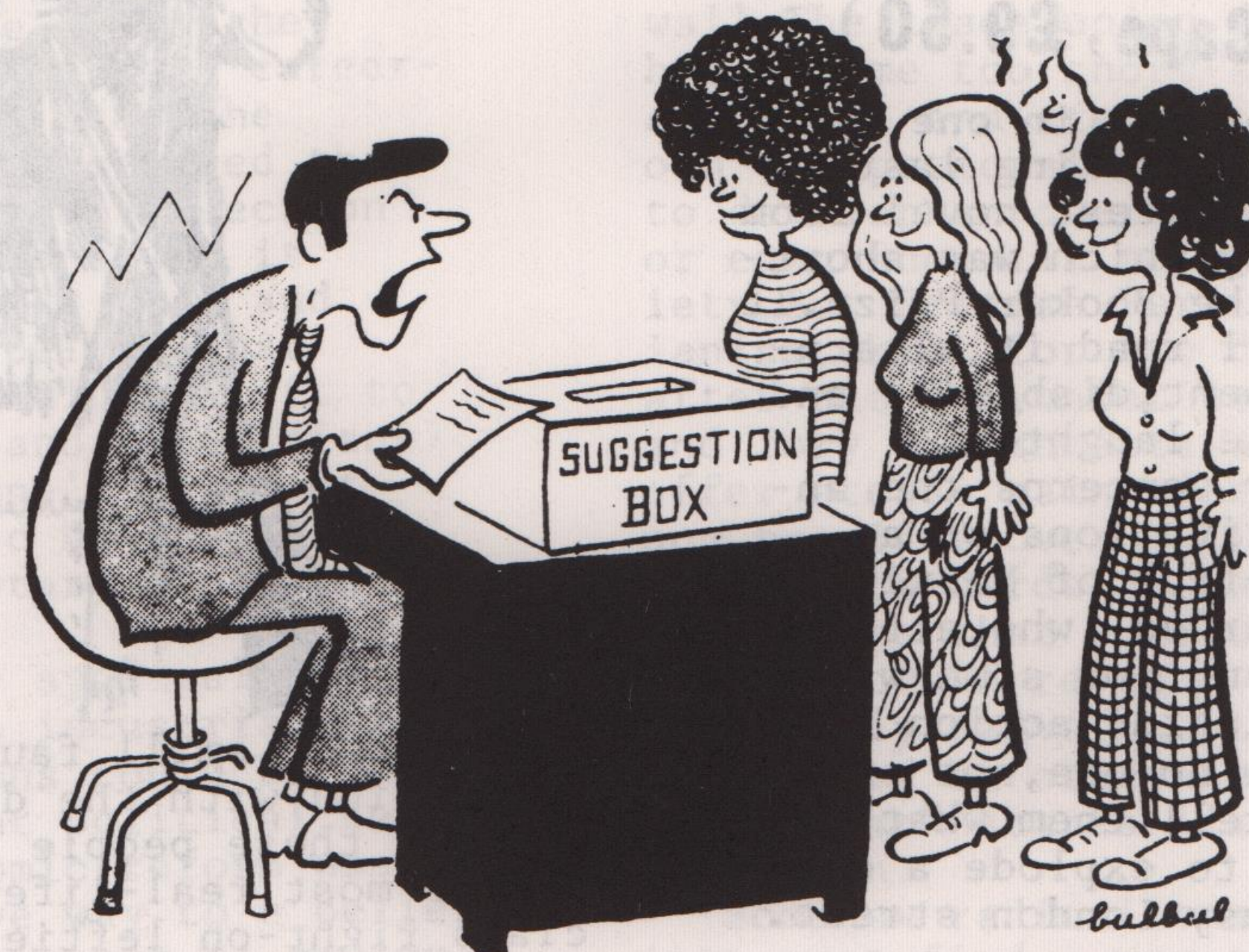
The Contracts strikers are at present picketing shops throughout North East England that stock French Connection clothes. Exports and imports of French Connection garments are at present being looked at. The N.U.S. have agreed to black all French Connection clothes when it is found out when and where they take place. Blackings by garment workers, transport workers and shop assistants are needed along with the picketing of French Connection stockists in other areas.

STRIKE AT SILENTNIGHT

530 workers at the Silentnight Bedding Factories at Sutton in Yorkshire and Barnoldswick in Lancashire have been on strike since June. The strike started because the boss announced 52 redundancies after workers had agreed to a no wage rise/no redundancies package.

Since then Silentnight - whose chairman Tom Clarke has been dubbed 'Mr Wonderful' - by Thatcher - have sacked all the strikers. Scabs are being bussed in. Hull dockers are supporting the strike by refusing to handle Silentnight exports. Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures are also active in showing solidarity. In October a coachload of mining women from Pontefract and Castleford joined the picket lines at the Sutton factory.

Info from, and donations to Sutton Silentnight Womens Support Group, c/o Mrs Pat McCormack, Northstead, North Rd., Sutton-in-Craven, Nr Keighley BD20 7PG.



WHICH ONE OF YOU SUGGESTED LAYING OFF MANAGEMENT?